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Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains resolutions and decisions adopted at the regular sessions of the regional commissions in the first half of 2011: the Economic Commission for Africa held its forty-fourth session in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 March 2011; the Economic Commission for Europe held its sixty-fourth session in Geneva from 29 to 31 March 2011. Full texts of the resolutions are available from: www.un.org/regionalcommissions/sessions.html.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Council

A. Economic Commission for Africa

1. At its forty-fourth session, held in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 March 2011, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) adopted its resolution 889 (XLIV), based on which the following resolution is submitted for action by the Council.

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

The Economic and Social Council,

Taking note of resolution 889 (XLIV) adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development annexed to the present resolution,

Recognizing the important role of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning in capacity-building as well as the pressing need to restore planning frameworks across the African continent,

1. *Notes* the invitation to the Council by the Economic Commission for Africa to lend its support to an increase in the Organization's grant to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning;

2. *Invites* the General Assembly to increase significantly the Organization's grant to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning so as to allow the Institute to effectively carry out its mission in supporting the capacity-building efforts of its member States;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to facilitate the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex
Resolution 889 (XLIV) on the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling its resolution 875 (XLIII) on the repositioning of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning,

Having received with great satisfaction the report submitted to it on the work of the Institute over the past year showing the commendable progress that has been made in programme delivery and management,

Taking note of the steps taken to physically renovate the Institute building and efforts made for vigorous outreach,

Acknowledging the substantially upscaled level of contributions to the Institute from a record number of countries as well as from development partners,

Recognizing the important role of the Institute in capacity-building as well as the pressing need to restore planning frameworks across the continent,

Recalling its endorsement of the request by the Governing Council of the Institute for a significant increase in the Organization's annual grant to the Institute,

1. *Commends* the Governing Council and management of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning for the achievements recorded to restore the Institute's capacity to deliver on its programmes;

2. *Calls upon* the management of the Economic Commission for Africa to continue with the full programmatic integration of the Institute into its programme of work;

3. *Notes with appreciation* that the Institute's member States and partners have renewed their commitments to the Institute and that many of them have paid their contributions, and urges member States and partners to continue to show support to the Institute by continuing to pay their assessed contributions and any outstanding arrears;

4. *Reiterates its request* that the Organization's grant to the Institute be significantly increased and invites the Secretary-General to take all the necessary measures to implement this request, including by bringing the present resolution to the attention of the Economic and Social Council;

5. *Invites* the Economic and Social Council to lend its support to the request to increase the Organization's grant to the Institute so as to allow it to effectively carry out its mission in supporting the capacity-building efforts of its member States;

6. *Reiterates its request* to the Governing Council of the Institute to continue to furnish it with an annual report on the progress made in the work of the Institute.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

2. At its sixty-fourth session, held in Geneva from 29 to 31 March 2011, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) proposed the following decision for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.[1]

Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines

The Economic and Social Council, taking note of decision A (64) of the Economic Commission for Europe and welcoming the endorsement by the Commission of the *Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines*,[2] decides to invite States Members of the United Nations, international organizations and the regional commissions to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures for ensuring application of the *Best Practice Guidance* in countries worldwide.

[1] See E/ECE/1462.

[2] *Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 10.II.E.2).

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

A. Economic Commission for Africa

3. At its forty-fourth session,[3] held in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 March 2011, the Commission approved a Ministerial Statement and several resolutions, which are hereinunder brought to the attention of the Council.

Summary of the Ministerial Statement, 29 March 2011, Addis Ababa

4. The African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development deliberated on the theme of "Governing development in Africa" and acknowledged that it is both timely and pertinent. While the Ministers noted that Africa has sustained relatively high growth rates since the turn of the century, averaging more than 5 per cent per year, this did not result in significant creation of employment or a sufficiently equitable distribution of benefits. They also expressed their concern that, at the present rate of growth, a significant number of African countries would not achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015.

5. The Ministers underscored the need to rethink the role of the State in Africa's economic transformation and development and called for the construction of African developmental States that use the role of the State in planning, formulation and implementation of appropriate development plans and policies, and the market as an instrument for governing development and promoting structural transformation. The Ministers noted that the developmental State had a crucial role to play in harnessing regional integration to promote economic and social development and underscored the need for African developmental States to put in place strong regional and continental integration institutions with appropriate mechanisms to coordinate, implement and monitor integration policies and programmes.

6. The Ministers committed themselves, inter alia, to taking a direct and active role in ongoing efforts at rebuilding local, national, subregional and regional capacities for development thinking and planning, economic management and policy coordination; promoting inclusive public policy processes; mobilizing financial resources to meet Africa's investment needs; addressing the impact of climate change; increasing resources for health financing and strengthening dialogue and partnership with ministries of health to ensure better understanding of health needs; supporting the Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness (MRDE) in Africa; encouraging ongoing United Nations system support for the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); and supporting investments in science and technology.

Governing development in Africa: the role of the State in economic transformation (resolution 879 (XLIV))

7. The Conference of Ministers recognized the need to rethink the role of the State in economic diversification and the structural transformation of Africa, and urged African Governments to promote a developmental State that would transform

[3] Including the Fourth Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance.

its political system to a developmental one. It also called upon African Governments to formulate and implement inclusive social and economic policies and strategies aimed at addressing social concerns such as widespread poverty and massive youth unemployment, and appealed to African countries to strengthen public fiscal governance. The Conference of Ministers encouraged African countries to strengthen institutions responsible for long-term development planning and strategy setting and requested the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and regional economic communities to assist in developing capacity needed for realizing the developmental State in Africa.

Millennium Development Goals (resolution 880 (XLIV))

8. The Conference of Ministers took note of the draft report on progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa 2011 and recommended its adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2011, and called upon African countries to mainstream Millennium Development Goals into their national development plans and strategies, implement Millennium Development Goal acceleration frameworks, set up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and share the annual Millennium Development Goals reports with legislative bodies, civil society and the private sector. The Ministers requested the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank to formulate and implement a special programme to support African countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, focusing on areas where least progress is being made, and to support the efforts of African countries in promoting dialogue between Governments and key stakeholders and foster human and social development through social protection programmes and policies.

Enhancing United Nations support towards accelerating the implementation of the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union and the programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (resolution 881 (XLIV))

9. The Conference of Ministers noted the ongoing efforts by the Economic Commission for Africa to strengthen Africa's subregional integration agenda through its five subregional offices, and called upon the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission to ensure that support for the 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union from the United Nations and other partners was provided within the framework of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the subregional coordination mechanisms. The Ministers also called upon United Nations agencies, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to immediately develop a comprehensive programme of work for the 10-year capacity-building programme and to mobilize the required resources for its implementation, and called for further support for subregional offices in order to accelerate the regional integration process and help member States and regional economic communities better tackle emerging development challenges.

Implementation of the African Charter on Statistics and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (resolution 882 (XLIV))

10. The Conference of Ministers, considering the importance of statistical information for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development

programmes and policies and the economic and political integration of Africa, invited all African Union member States that had yet to sign and ratify the African Charter on Statistics to make every effort to do so within a period of one year to enable it to enter into force. The Conference also requested member States, regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and other members of the African Statistical System to implement the peer review mechanism of the national statistical systems; ensure that all countries are covered within five years; take necessary steps towards the implementation of all initiatives contained in the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, and further develop other strategies in emerging areas such as gender statistics.

African risk capacity: a pan-African disaster risk pool (resolution 883 (XLIV))

11. The Conference of Ministers, recognizing the vulnerability of food-insecure populations as well as national economies to weather shocks, welcomed the African Union Commission's proposal to work towards the establishment of an African-owned pan-African disaster risk pooling facility that would provide contingency funds to participating African Union member States in the event of extreme weather shocks. It invited African Union member States to support the Commission's efforts through contributions to the design phase of the risk capacity project.

Climate change and sustainable development in Africa (resolution 884 (XLIV))

12. The Conference of Ministers, noting that the impacts of climate change have far-reaching implications for Africa's growth, and that climate change can severely undermine progress towards achieving sustainable development, committed itself to effectively mainstream climate change concerns into development policies, strategies and programmes in Africa. The Conference requested Africa's development partners to increase their support for the Great Green Wall initiative and the Climate for Development in Africa programme and called upon member States to establish economic, regulatory and legislative mechanisms to enable transitioning to green economy development paths and engage in the Rio+20 preparatory process in order to effectively participate in the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The Conference called upon the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank to ensure that the Climate for Development in Africa programme benefits African countries and regional economic communities, and to sustain their support for the African climate change negotiators and policymakers in order to ensure that Africa continues to participate effectively in the international climate change negotiations. It also encouraged the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development to deepen their cooperation.

Health financing in Africa (resolution 885 (XLIV))

13. The Conference invited member States, regional institutions and development partners to mobilize additional resources through innovative mechanisms, including debt relief, public-private partnerships and taxation on harmful products. The Conference urged regional institutions and development partners to improve coordination and harmonization of support for national health priorities to deliver better health for African populations, especially the most vulnerable groups. It also

called for enhanced governance and accountability mechanisms in the management of health resources.

14. The Conference also requested member States to develop the traditional medicine sector as a viable cost containment and complimentary strategy, and to bridge the gap between access and health needs, and further urged member States with excess capacity of human resources in the health sector to deploy some of those resources to countries emerging from conflict and disaster, based on bilateral agreements. The Conference encouraged ministers of finance and health to partner in the implementation of strategies, linking with other sectors to realize intersectoral synergies, and urged member States, with the support of development partners, to share best practices and knowledge through South-South cooperation.

Illicit financial flows (resolution 886 (XLIV))

15. The Conference of Ministers, recognizing the importance of cooperation at the national, regional and international levels in combating illicit financial flows, inter alia, agreed on the following actions to combat illicit financial flows: (a) determine the nature, patterns and level of illicit financial flows; (b) assess the complex and long-term implications of illicit financial flows for development; (c) sensitize African Governments, citizens and international development partners as to the scale of illicit financial flows and their adverse effect on development, and mobilize political support and promote implementation of rules and regulations that are necessary to combat illicit financial outflows; (d) increase collaboration and cooperation among African Union member States, regional economic communities and international partners in an effort to reduce illicit financial outflows; and (e) tackle illicit financial flows from Africa by establishing a specific institution or agency such as a high-level panel on illicit financial flows and equipping it to deal with the problem effectively. The Conference requested the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to play an integral supportive role in implementing the actions identified above.

Enhancing science and technology for development in Africa (resolution 887 (XLIV))

16. The Conference of Ministers noted with appreciation the leadership of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission in the launch of pivotal initiatives in support of linking science, technology and innovation to business development, and in sustaining the Science with Africa Conference, which has become the leading forum for interactions between scientists, policymakers and the private sector. The Conference called on African countries to strengthen their intellectual property regimes to harness innovation in the deployment of science and technology, including the protection of national indigenous knowledge and bioassets, and urged development partners to provide the necessary support to ensure the continued implementation of the outcomes of the Science with Africa Conference. It also requested the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission to continue their support for the effective implementation of those pioneering initiatives and invited African Governments and the private sector to support the aforementioned pan-African initiatives, and to contribute to the African Science, Technology and Innovation Endowment Fund in support of African innovators and inventors, particularly women innovators.

Proposed programme of work and priorities for the biennium 2012-2013 (resolution 888 (XLIV))

17. The Conference of Ministers endorsed the proposed programme of work of the Economic Commission for Africa and priorities for the biennium 2012-2013, and requested the Executive Secretary of ECA to ensure that commensurate resources are provided for effective implementation of the proposed programme of work for the period 2012-2013, and urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure that Africa remains one of the highest priorities on the United Nations development agenda in order to enable African countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals and other development challenges. The Conference also called for enhanced use of results-based management approaches for better accountability and impact in programme delivery.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

18. At its sixty-fourth session, held in Geneva from 29 to 31 March 2011, the Economic Commission for Europe adopted decision A (64), whose provisions are hereinunder brought to the attention of the Council.

19. The Commission reaffirmed the strategic directions of the 2005 ECE reform and the commitment of its member States to support and strengthen the effective implementation of the organization's mandate. The Commission encouraged ECE to continue to exercise its catalytic role in bringing the sustainable development goals agreed on by the international community down to the regional level and supporting their implementation, and requested ECE to continue contributing to the United Nations system-wide coherence at the national, regional and global levels. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the performance of the Executive Committee when acting on its behalf, and decided that the next session of the Commission would be held in 2013. The Commission invited the Executive Committee to consider how to better interact with the chairpersons of ECE sectoral committees with the aim of ensuring its role in terms of governance and oversight in the intersessional period.

Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

20. The Commission decided to organize the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on 1 and 2 December 2011 in Geneva, and invited member States to consider making contributions to defray the cost of the meeting.

Ministerial Conference on Ageing

21. The Commission recognized the central role of the ECE Working Group on Ageing in coordinating the regional elements of the review and implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPA) and decided to organize the ECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing on 19 and 20 September 2012.

United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia

22. The Commission welcomed the role of the Programme in promoting regional economic cooperation and facilitating peace and stability in Central Asia and the strengthened cooperation with Afghanistan at the level of the High-level Core Group on Regional Economic Cooperation.

Aid for trade

23. The Commission requested that work be undertaken, in cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other organizations, to encourage and ensure the full participation of all countries with economies in transition in the WTO Aid for Trade Initiative. The Commission also noted the results of the Ministerial Conference on the Aid-for-Trade Road Map for the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and requested the secretariat to work with WTO and other organizations to support the follow-up to the Conference.

Road safety

24. The Commission took note of the launching of the Decade of Action for Road Safety and of the ECE initiatives to scale up road safety activities, and supported efforts by ECE to improve coordination with other United Nations and non-United Nations international actors in areas impacting road safety, and called upon the international donor community to provide additional funding in support of road safety action programmes at ECE.

Transport

25. The Commission took note of transport infrastructure development in Europe and Central Asia, as well as of the progress of the Trans-European Motorways, Trans-European Railways and the Euro-Asian transport linkages projects and invited the secretariat to continue its support for these country initiatives. It also requested the Executive Committee to ensure the unimpeded functioning of the TIR Convention.

Sustainable forest management and the International Year of Forests

26. The Commission reiterated its commitment and support for the work on forests and timber undertaken by ECE and welcomed the proposed activities for the International Year of Forests, and requested the secretariat to continue to offer the expertise and services of the joint section of the Economic Commission for Europe and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in support of pan-European forest activities.

Housing challenges in the region

27. The Commission encouraged the Committee on Housing and Land Management to consider land administration and "real estate markets" as key components of its work, and invited the Committee to report to the Executive Committee on future policy directions and the possibility of holding a ministerial meeting in 2012 to assess progress in the implementation of ECE housing instruments.

Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" and the environment and health process

28. The Commission recognized the significant role of the "Environment for Europe" process in advancing environmental governance across the region, and expressed its appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe". It recognized the value of multilateral environmental agreements adopted by ECE, including important instruments on water, air, environmental impact assessment, industrial accidents, and public participation and access to information and justice in environmental matters.

Statistics

29. The Commission recognized the need for robust, timely and comparable statistics on environmental indicators, and for strengthening such indicators. It supported the work of ECE with national environmental experts and official statisticians on addressing methodological discrepancies, data gaps and lack of clear guidance related to the production of environmental indicators in key areas such as clean air, energy, drinking water, waste, forest biodiversity and sustainable transport.

Energy

30. The Commission encouraged ECE to continue to work for regional dialogue, integration and cooperation through safe norms and standards for production, transformation, transit and transport, and uses of energy that contribute to secure, affordable and sustainable economic development.